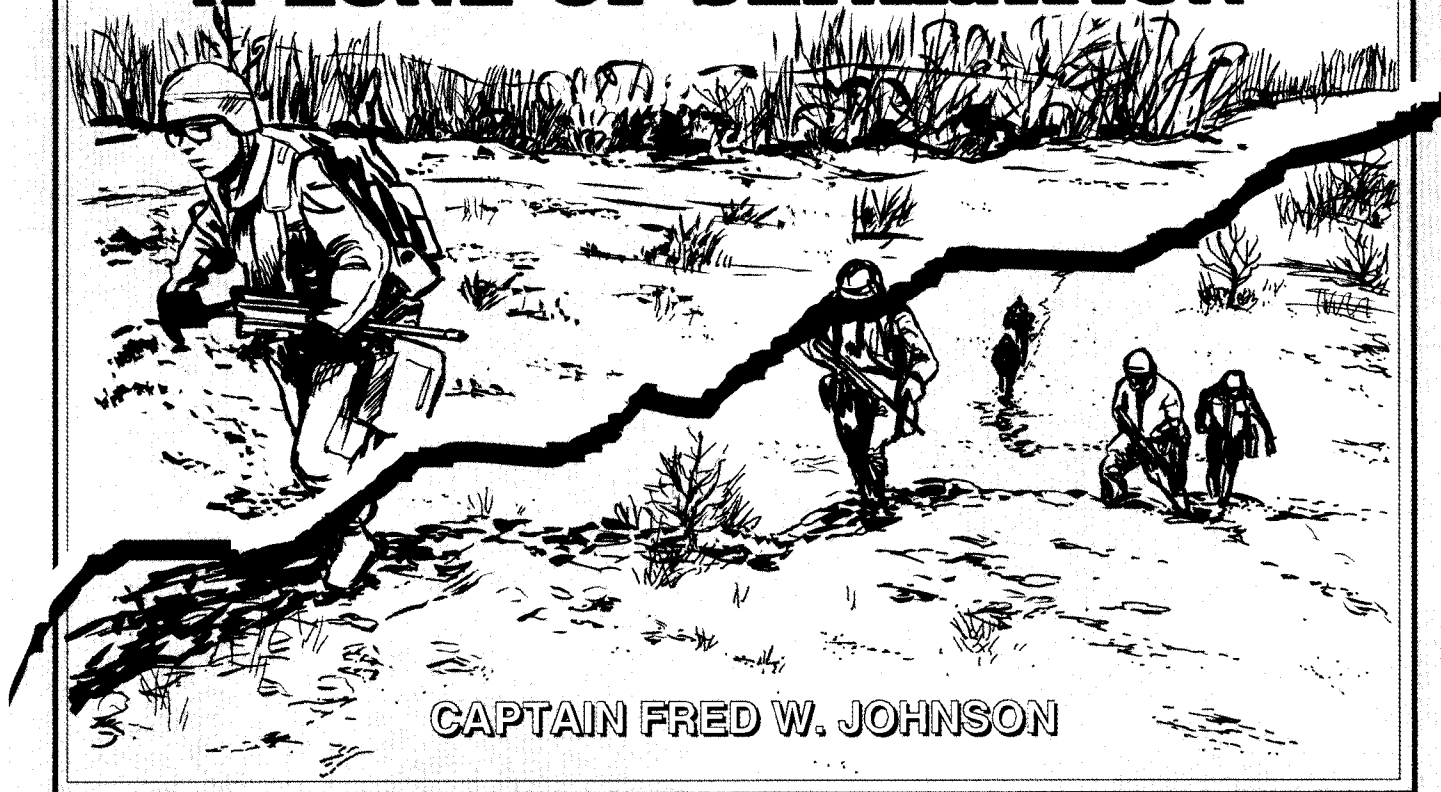


# ESTABLISHING A ZONE OF SEPARATION



CAPTAIN FRED W. JOHNSON

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article is extracted from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) Newsletter No. 96-5, "Drawing a Line in the Mud: Establishing and Controlling a Zone of Separation (ZOS)," May 1996.*

A team from the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) at Fort Leavenworth deployed to Bosnia to collect lessons learned during Operation *Joint Endeavor*. One of the operations the team observed was the establishment of a zone of separation (ZOS) between former warring factions by elements of Task Force (TF) Eagle, which consisted of several brigade-size task forces.

This operation was accomplished within 30 days of the deployment—an admirable feat, considering that the ZOS snaked over 1,000 miles of war-torn countryside that contained millions of mines, thousands of bunkers, and hundreds of miles of trenchlines. In addition, the warring factions, which had been engaged in intense combat for more than four years, were now

required to work together to develop and execute a plan for removing the mines and fortifications within the zone. And the soldiers and leaders of TF Eagle were responsible for verifying the work and making sure the factions complied with the requirements agreed upon at the Dayton, Ohio, conference in December 1995, and outlined in the General Agreed Framework for Peace.

Although this article considers the assigned areas of only one brigade, the tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) used generally reflect those of the other brigade task forces in theater.

## **The Operational Environment**

The ZOS, as defined in the agreement, was represented by several potentially complex control measures (Figure 1) that merit further explanation:

**The Agreed Cease Fire Line (ACFL)**—the place where the fighting had stopped. TF Eagle units marked the line and a two-kilometer zone on each side of it. This four-kilometer

zone was the ACFL zone of separation.

**The Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL)**—the line the parties in Dayton agreed would be the permanent boundary between them. In some instances, this line and the ACFL were the same. The IEBL became effective 45 days after the implementation force (IFOR) accepted the transfer of authority from the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). At this time, the IEBL ZOS and its four-kilometer buffer zone replaced the ACFL ZOS and became the permanent zone.

**The Areas of Transfer**—areas where the lines did not directly correspond. These were areas that one party would turn over to another.

**The 10-Kilometer Zone**—a 10-kilometer exclusion zone on either side of the ACFL, within which the status of all faction equipment and forces had to be reported. TF Eagle dedicated assets to verifying that the factions complied with the reporting requirements.

The ZOS was a dynamic area that changed in size according to the requirements and specified timelines of the agreement. Most of these timelines were based on events that followed the transfer of authority from UNPROFOR to IFOR. The following were the requirements as they pertained to the establishment of the ZOS:

- Within 30 days, all parties were to withdraw all forces to their respective sides of the ACFL ZOS and remove all mines, unexploded ordnance, explosive devices, wire obstacles, and fortifications.
- The IEBL would become effective in 45 days. Withdrawing forces would completely vacate and clear areas of transfer, including the removal of mines, demolitions, and unexploded ordnance.
- Entities to which an area was being transferred could not put forces into the new areas until transfer date plus 91 days, or as determined by the IFOR commander.

Each TF Eagle brigade-sized task force was responsible for

at least one segment of the ZOS in its area of responsibility (AOR). The brigade observed by the CALL team had three. It was also responsible for enforcing the peace agreement through coordination with all three factions. Its sector spanned 58 kilometers north to south and 66 kilometers east to west. Within its AOR (Figure 2), the brigade was responsible for more than 114 kilometers of the ZOS and for verifying the removal of more than 1,306 bunkers, 713 minefields, and 200 kilometers

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of trenchlines. Its AOR also included seven major populated areas and numerous smaller towns, which required dedicated assets to ensure mission success.

To facilitate force protection and sustainment operations, 11 company-sized lodgement areas were established, along with the brigade operating base and the brigade support area. Platoon-sized units manned 11 checkpoints and four permanent observation posts and secured several other critical nodes.

Under the peace agreement, the factions were to clear the mines, but the task force soldiers and leaders had to watch them execute the mission and then verify that it had been completed to standard. There were instances in which the factions could not complete the mission without the assistance of TF Eagle forces. In this effort, the leaders had to be careful to ensure impartiality. This was difficult because of the disparity and quality of equipment and levels of training. The three factions had one mine plow among them, and some subordinate units were more efficient in completing tasks than others.

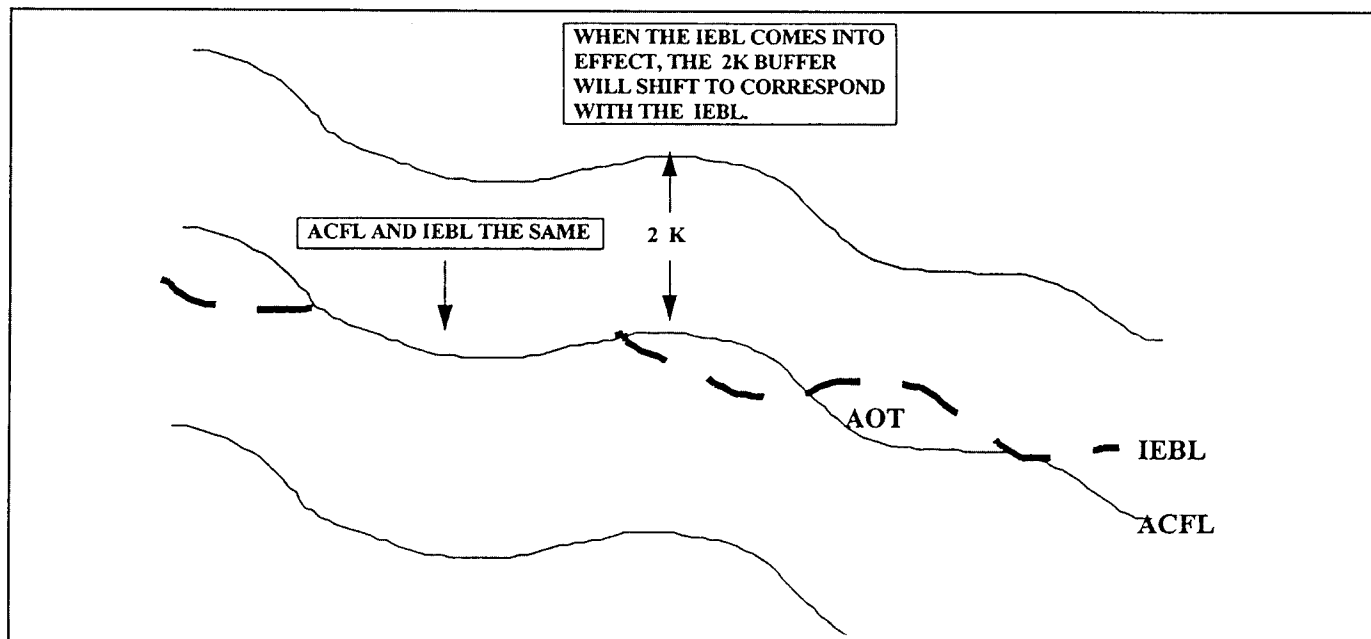


Figure 1

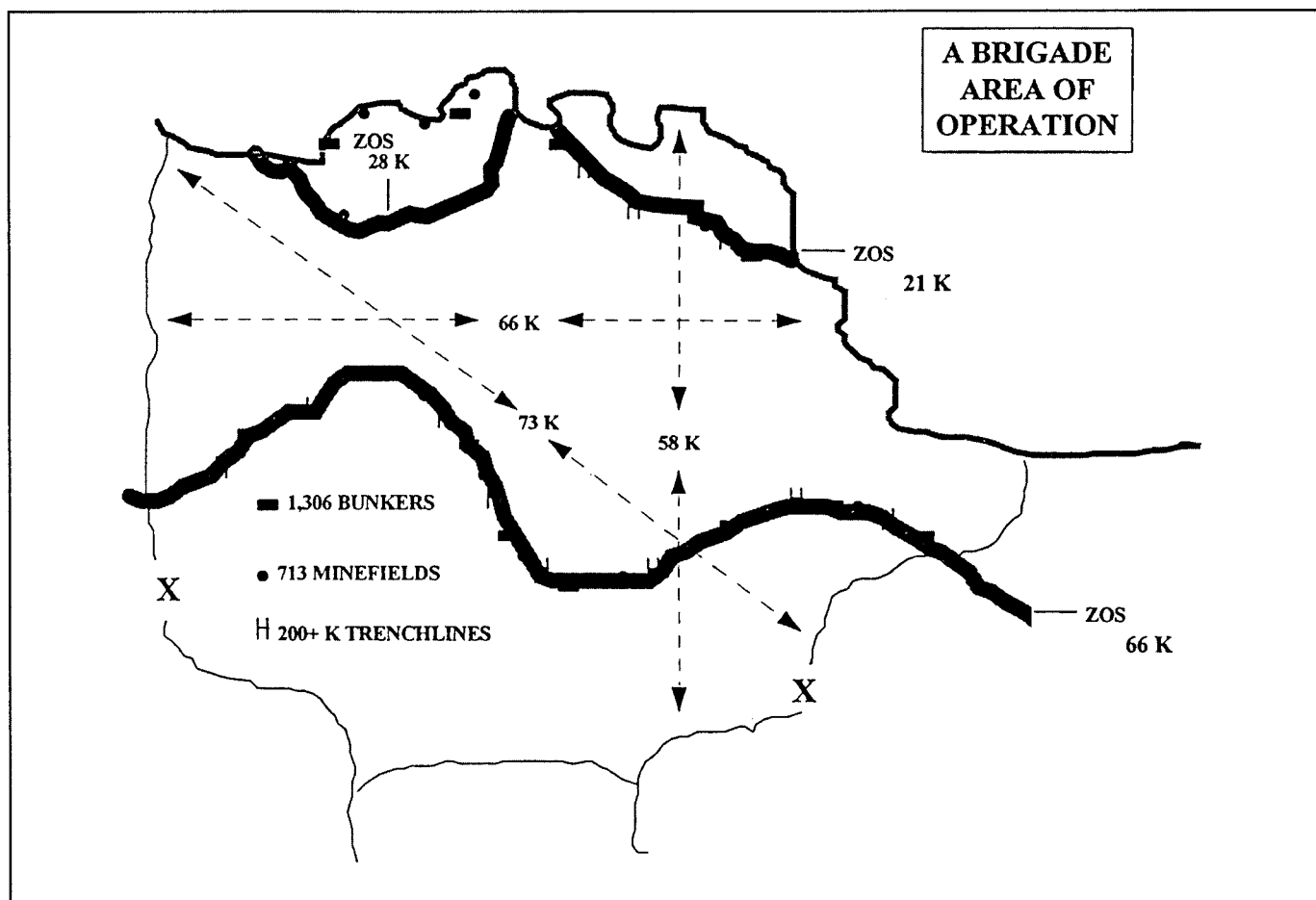


Figure 2

Leaders had to balance accomplishing tasks with maintaining impartiality.

In Operation *Joint Endeavor*, U.S. commanders were exposed for the first time to the concept of joint military commissions (JMCs), formally established bodies in which the guidelines for assistance are laid out. The operation required a great deal of direct contact and political interaction between its military commanders and the factions' military or political leaders. The aim of this interaction was to resolve conflicts or secure the consent or cooperation of local leaders, and sometimes the commanders had to bring the protagonists together and negotiate agreements or mediate disputes.

In such situations, commanders could not expect to function successfully using purely military principles and logic. The success of the mission depended on their ability to balance a combination of political power and interests, cultural values, personalities, and perceptions. Leaders in TF Eagle found the JMC process an indispensable part of their mission to guarantee peace in the region.

The stability operations environment provided unique considerations for maneuver and mobility. After the initial positions and lodgement areas were obtained, maneuvering and positioning for advantage sometimes entailed relatively little movement or relocation of forces. The mobility challenges were much the same as in combat environments, except that the forces were not only applying their own mobility assets but also working with faction forces and civil authorities to

overcome challenges to mobility.

In conventional combat, units change locations with respect to each other, or add combat power to mass their effects, by changing force ratios. The early phases of Operation *Joint Endeavor* demonstrated that maneuver had little to do with the movement of forces. Following the entry operation, maneuver sometimes took the form of forceful discussion carried out at a JMC, or of movement and positioning to provide security to the opposing factions as they carried out the peace plan. Sometimes, the best way to gain and retain "positional advantage" was to ensure the factions' perception of TF Eagle as an impartial enforcer of the peace agreement.

Because of the extraordinary number of mines in the theater, mine clearing and marking influenced operations at all levels. The ability of the forces to conduct the mission without sustaining casualties demonstrated the proficiency and competency of NATO forces. Such a perception would therefore contribute to the successful achievement of the desired end.

The former warring factions had been engaged in a war of attrition, fighting from trenches and bunkers along battle lines that had changed hands several times. The trench systems were along either side of the confrontation line in the ZOS, and between these trenches were numerous minefields and destroyed villages. The roads through the ZOS had been blocked by minefields, craters, tank ditches, berms, and bunkers.

The minefields off the roads and between the trenches were often difficult to clear because of confusion as to their exact

positioning. Since the battle lines had changed hands, the factions could not guarantee the location of the mines and refused to clear many of these fields. Therefore, until a mine clearing capability could be contracted, many off-the-road regions within the ZOS could not be cleared for civilian use. Although this did not hinder mobility on the primary routes, it did restrict any off-road movement that might be needed.

The portions of the ZOS that were not cleared hindered the continued dismantling of the factions' defensive positions. If

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minefields could not be cleared, trenches could not be collapsed and bunkers could not be destroyed. And as long as TF Eagle soldiers had to continue operating in the ZOS, the uncleared areas would be a threat to them.

### **Planning ZOS Operations**

The first step in planning a ZOS operation, as with any other, is to conduct a mission analysis. For most stability operations, the starting point for the mission analysis is the peace agreement. In this case, in addition to the broad tasks to be accomplished and the timelines to be met, several implied tasks were also identified. These implied tasks represented the details of establishing the ZOS—such things as establishing JMCs to determine the factions' courses of action (COAs) for compliance and for establishing checkpoints.

The brigade had only two weeks after deployment in the AOR before the first deadline of the agreement. The commander held his first JMC within four days of the arrival of the first two battalions (the third did not arrive for another month). Because he had deployed several weeks before the brigade's main body, he had been able to discuss general concepts for the separation of forces and the establishment of the ZOS with the faction leaders, and this helped set the stage for the JMC.

At the JMC, the requirements of the peace agreement were read, and the commander instructed the factions to develop the COAs. Within two hours, the plan for the separation of forces and the initial tasks for establishing the ZOS were complete. (In preparing for the JMC, the commander did require his staff to develop a generic COA in case the factions came to an impasse during the conference.)

Much like the JMC, the coordination meetings held between company or troop commanders and the faction leaders (often brigade-level commanders) were key to planning and executing ZOS tasks. Although the broad tasks of compliance (clearance of routes, removal of bunkers) were agreed upon in the JMC, the specific ways those tasks would be done were agreed upon during the coordination meetings.

Initially, the company commanders met daily with the factions at a central location to discuss the plan for the day; then they would execute the missions. These meetings were time consuming, often leaving only six to eight hours to accom-

plish the tasks. As a result, it was decided that meetings would be held once a week instead. At the weekly meeting, the factions were required to give the company commander a schedule of tasks they would complete during the coming week.

The nature of Operation *Joint Endeavor* entailed both decentralized planning and decentralized execution at battalion and sometimes company level. The brigade's plan was often a compilation of sub-unit plans, developed by battalion staffs from information gathered at daily coordination meetings with faction leaders. More often than not, battalions executed missions on the basis of the brigade commander's intent, broad goals from JMCs, and the results of their daily coordination meetings. Because the brigade staff was not always in the information chain, missions could not be supported or tracked without the battalion's detailed input.

Because of "bottom to top" planning and the high operational tempo, it was essential that TF Eagle units develop a system of tracking the missions. On any given day, a brigade might conduct up to 50 missions, often unrelated to one another, that entailed small unit activities—bunker destruction verification, mine clearance, checkpoint operations, and assessments of local towns in terms of civil affairs, counterintelligence, or psychological operations.

To facilitate the tracking of battalion-level missions, the brigade required the battalions and companies to submit daily reports of unit activities, down to company level, for the following day's operations. The missions, by number and description, were recorded by the night battle captain and briefed during the morning staff update. The battalions were then required to report every two hours on the progress of the missions (including a negative situation report). The information from these reports was then annotated on the tracking worksheet. At mission completion, a closing report was required. The results of the missions were reported on the operations and intelligence net for S-2 analysis. During the mission, spot reports were rendered, as required, which further developed the operational picture of the AOR.

### **Establishing the ZOS**

The separation of forces was helped along by the willingness of the factions and the early deployment of TF Eagle leaders to effect coordination with them. For the most part, the factions were already separated, but the major task of units was to avert confrontations and ensure that the factions maintained the integrity of the ACFL ZOS.

The factions were required to provide TF Eagle with overlays showing the location of all units, weapons, and equipment—not only in the ZOS, but within the 10-kilometer exclusion zone as well. The factions also had to notify TF Eagle units when any personnel or equipment moved through the zone. Communication was maintained with faction headquarters, and ultimately factional liaison officers were located at the brigade headquarters to facilitate this process.

The TTPs for the separation of forces and the establishment of the ZOS were developed jointly by the faction leaders at the brigade's first JMC.

Aside from the designation of the actual zones, one of the

first control measures established was ZOS blocks, which allowed TF Eagle to track the progress of separation and the establishment of the ZOS.

The first priority was to ensure freedom of movement. This was not just for the task force's convenience but to help the factions restore normal commercial and civilian traffic along the country's main highways. All of this required an enormous effort on the part of the combat soldiers.

As a result, the initial focus of the brigade's efforts was to clear routes within the ZOS. TF Eagle and the factions would accomplish this by "punching holes" through the zone, which entailed the clearance of major routes. Once this was done, both the task force and the factions could focus their efforts on the separation of forces and other requirements of the agreement.

Since part of the implementation of the peace agreement was ensuring freedom of movement through the ZOS, force positioning often became an issue during JMCs as it pertained to guaranteeing that freedom. The faction forces were primarily concerned with the security of their villages, which were often on the confrontation line or just beyond it. It was necessary to emphasize that TF Eagle units would not be positioned by the faction forces, but in a manner decided by the task force commanders.

The placement of the soldiers could be accomplished in many ways. The key was visibility. The soldiers had to conduct day and night patrols along all routes and across country that was cleared. To ensure that freedom of movement was retained once established, these forces manned checkpoints along the primary commercial and civilian traffic routes. Elements of TF Eagle had to secure and retain key intersections, interchanges, and bridges.

Route clearance, or ZOS breaching, was the technique units used to clear routes in the zone. Company commanders would

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link up with their factional counterparts and coordinate the tasks to be accomplished from the schedule agreed upon at the weekly coordination meeting. Linkups would take place on both sides of the ZOS with the respective faction leaders. Faction soldiers (overwatched by TF Eagle units) would begin clearing from their side, working toward the ACFL. Because each faction was concerned that the other was not executing its responsibilities, it was essential that the clearances be conducted simultaneously.

The TTPs employed by the brigade included the following steps and performance measures:

Commanders determined which routes had to be opened and then synchronized their resources to facilitate deliberate and faithful execution.

Company commanders held daily coordination meetings with the factions in their AORs. These meetings set the framework for the way the factions would execute their compliance tasks (destroying bunkers, clearing minefields) and the way TF Eagle would verify the completion of those tasks.

The task force received detailed maps marking minefield locations. Coordination was made to determine what equipment the factional units would need to clear routes through their minefields and locate and mark other minefields. The task force soldiers had to be ready to provide the factions with body armor, helmets, medical support, and standard marking supplies. All of this coordination had to be worked out through interpreters on the ground in the days before the clearing effort was to begin.

As U.S. forces moved into sector, the engineers made contact with UN forces in the TF Eagle sector and received accurate information from them. This information was disseminated to other units through sketches, copies of mine markers, and photographs. The UN forces' extensive experience with the mine threat in the region helped with force protection efforts. Units coordinated with all of the factions to clear designated mobility corridors through the ZOS. Either at the JMCs or through commander-to-commander meetings with the factional brigades, times and link-up points were defined and agreed upon. Usually, the schedule was an 0830 linkup with an 0930 work time. At the designated time, the company commander or platoon leader would move to a linkup point.

Simultaneously, both sides would link up with the TF Eagle elements and begin to organize their work for the day. Usually, the mission would be for one or two routes at a time, but initially as many as three per company-size unit to facilitate freedom of movement.

Mobility teams moved to designated checkpoints and made face-to-face coordination the morning of the mission. The lineup for a mobility team was factional engineers, followed by an M1 tank roller, armored combat earthmover (ACE) or combat engineer vehicle (CEV), followed by an engineer squad, followed by a Bradley section or tank platoon and accompanied by a medic. The factions often provided medics as well. After the linkup of forces, the leaders on both sides were identified. The leaders of the clearing teams were further identified, and the company and faction leaders physically linked up. At this point, the team leaders made detailed plans for the day's work.

The teams left together, with the factions leading the clearing teams into the zone. The factional forces gathered the necessary equipment, if they had it, and began to clear mines.

The easiest to clear were the surface-laid mines. The faction engineers gathered them and separated the reusable ones from those that were rusted or semi-destroyed. Many were in bad condition. Some of these were defused and collected, and others had to be blown in place. On-site negotiations were conducted for clearing the shoulders up to 10 meters on either side of the road. The method the factions used for probing was very different from U.S. methods. They had long poles (about one meter) with three-inch spikes on the end. They would walk slowly forward jabbing the ground in front of them. They said

they were primarily looking for antitank mines just below the surface. The factions were very nervous about clearing the PMA-1 antipersonnel mines.

The lanes were cleared in two directions at once; for example, one faction cleared from south to north and another from north to south. The companies provided security for them. One issue that had to be worked out on the ground was a meeting point between the two forces. In one case, one side wanted to stop 100 meters short of where the other side would stop. Company forces on the ground had to push the issue firmly to make sure the job was finished according to the standards of the agreement. Again, the job of carrying out international policy was subordinated to the ranks of lieutenant, captain, and lieutenant colonel.

Mobility work had to be done to finish the tasks on the lanes. Often, berms had to be cut, walls or other mobility obstacles dismantled, and craters filled. The ACE was very useful in

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this effort. If traffic on a lane was expected to be high, gravel was needed to pour over the filled-in trenches. Otherwise, within 48 hours the earth would sink into the trenches and stop wheeled vehicle traffic on that lane.

Ideally, the factions should have been made responsible for "proofing" the routes they had cleared—ensuring that the area was free of mines—but they did not have the equipment to complete this task to standard. As a result, TF Eagle units often had to proof a route, using an M1 tank with a roller.

Proofing could be a dangerous business; three mine detonations occurred in the brigade's sector during proofing missions. Fortunately, because of the TTPs the units used, these detonations caused no injuries to soldiers and only minimal damage to equipment. These TTPs were developed and refined as a result of the task force's highly successful after-action review and lessons learned program.

### **The Verification Process**

At times, the process of verifying compliance with the peace agreement was impeded by the number of obstacles and fortifications in the ZOS and the available combat power. Before the tasks could be accomplished, the minefields, bunkers, and trenches had to be identified; the factions had to have the manpower and equipment to execute the missions; and U.S. forces had to have the personnel to verify the process while also executing other missions that were part of the operation.

The factions provided overlays showing the locations of fortifications and obstacles, but these were not always reliable, and the brigade troops were still responsible for confirming them. It was argued, for instance, that to verify the dismantling of bunkers the unit should know the grid and numbers by sector. The grid and numbers should be documented and then

annotated as "dismantled or destroyed" in sequence as the factions completed the task. At first glance, this seemed to be a reasonable technique for measuring the tangible success of verification—except for the 1,300 bunkers and 200 miles of trenchlines.

To help confirm the numbers, aerial reconnaissance was conducted over the ZOS with AH-1 and OH-58 helicopters, and this was generally effective in identifying bunkers and trenchlines. But grids were determined using precision GPS (global positioning system) receivers on the aircraft to provide approximate locations. Ideally, the OH-58 should have been equipped with a position and azimuth determining system to get a more definite grid location. Also, a scout weapons team has limited time on station. The problem was compounded by the fact that the brigade's air assets were tasked to reconnoiter another brigade's ZOS as well. Because of the limited station time, the reconnaissance was not nearly as detailed as it might have been. In addition, if the helicopters had had video recording capabilities, the brigade could have conducted a more thorough analysis of the ZOS and completed a more thorough debrief.

Using ground forces to confirm exact grid locations of the obstacles and fortifications would have required more manpower (combat power) than was available to accomplish the task in a timely manner.

One of the task force's primary missions was to conduct ZOS reconnaissance to confirm or deny a faction's compliance with the peace accord. TF Eagle initiated a ZOS reconnaissance board—modeled roughly after a targeting board—whose function was to synchronize intelligence information, reconnaissance assets, and verification requirements into a workable, comprehensive reconnaissance plan.

A sensitive aspect of the stability operations was the requirement to verify the extent to which the factions had complied with the agreement. Task force leaders soon realized the need to ensure that the ZOS reconnaissance was coordinated among air and ground assets, division and maneuver brigade elements, and U.S. and allied forces.

The board met daily at 0815 with the goal of planning reconnaissance missions for 96 hours ahead. The group developed a ZOS reconnaissance matrix that listed each ZOS block, the possible items of interest in each area, and the assets planned to reconnoiter each block, including Army aviation, ground reconnaissance, observation points, tactical air reconnaissance, intelligence, and special operations forces (SOFs). The goal was to reconnoiter each ZOS block every day with a mix of assets and to vary the reconnaissances in time and duration to avoid predictability.

First, fusing current intelligence and operations in a timely manner was difficult, especially in the beginning. The board meeting would produce a tentative fragmentary order (FRAGO) by late morning, but the current day's reconnaissance results would not be available until approximately 1800. This often caused major changes in the next day's plan, and the maneuver units executing the reconnaissance would get changes just hours before execution time. Added to this were the usual difficulties of getting several key staff members to yet another meet-

ing, as well as the challenge of integrating valuable but dispersed SOF assets. As the board drew closer to its goal of issuing a FRAGO 48 hours ahead, the process became somewhat smoother.

Second, there was an initial disagreement on whether the process should be top or bottom driven. TF Eagle was pressing the brigades for information on how much of their ZOS portions they could cover with organic assets, while the brigades were clamoring for the plan on the use of TF Eagle resources.

Finally, the task force members had to adjust their thought processes. Although the targeting board format and the *decide, detect, deliver, assess* methodology were useful as a starting point, many other factors came into play in the stability operations reconnaissance mission. Reconnaissance is fundamentally different from targeting, which in this scenario also involved changing perceptions. Every time a sensitive situation arose, board members had to consider the political ramifications, the input from coalition partners, regional history, and the specific rules of engagement.

The brigade's collection plan, developed from known faction locations, was aimed at verifying continued compliance with the peace agreement through reconnaissance and site inspections. In accordance with the agreement, the factions were required to provide the brigade with overlays of their equipment and weapons collection points within the 10-kilometer exclusion zone.

Although this 10-kilometer zone was not a zone of separation, the TTPs the brigade developed to verify the factions' compliance with the reporting requirements may be useful in future operations.

The brigade S-2 compiled this information on a database with the grid, amounts and types of equipment, the faction organization, and the most recent date it was observed. This information and the overlays were passed to the G-2 for incorporation into the division collection plan. These locations, along with additional sites confirmed by reconnaissance, were designated named areas of interest (NAIs). From the division collection plan, the brigade was required to reconnoiter the

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designated NAIs to confirm or deny that the equipment or weapons, by number and type, were still being maintained at that location. In turn, the brigade S-2 developed a collection plan that contained a total of 81 NAIs, including those tasked by division. In the brigade plan, units were tasked to conduct either a visual reconnaissance (drive-by) or site inspections.

The NAIs were assigned priorities for reconnaissance: every 5 days, every 7 days, every 10 days, and every 14 days. (There was a period of increased tension between the former warring

factions and TF Eagle that resulted in the collection sites being reconnoitered every two days.)

To facilitate this process and focus the collection and verification procedures, the brigade S-2 developed a system to coordinate the effort over time with a "10-day forecaster." This provided the day-by-day reconnaissance tasking by unit. If it was determined that a faction had moved equipment, or if increased amounts were identified at a collection point, a unit would be tasked to notify the collection site commander that he was delinquent in complying with the peace agreement.

This procedure assisted the verification process. Although the grids of collection points provided by the factions were sometimes 500 to 800 meters off, reconnaissance confirmed the locations, giving the brigade S-2 fairly accurate information with which to begin his collection planning. The requirement was still to verify continued compliance, and any change in the composition or disposition of weapons or equipment could indicate noncompliance. Because of the vast number of collection points, there was a potential for focusing the entire intelligence collection effort on these sites. This would have placed great demand on the units and may have deterred reconnaissance and surveillance planning to identify other significant faction activity. Still, the plan developed by the S-2 to collect and verify, by priority, over time left units free to conduct other reconnaissance missions.

The procedure was also effective in facilitating "stability engagements." Units periodically used combat camera crews to photograph equipment at the sites, which often identified changes in the composition of equipment. In cases where the factions had not notified IFOR of the changes, the photographs were used to demonstrate noncompliance and force them to submit reports and updates in a more timely manner.

A battalion air liaison officer (ALO) coordinated for an AC-130 aircraft to orbit the units' area during hours of darkness and identify faction movement or violations. Ground forces and an F-18 were also tasked to be prepared to react to any sightings by the AC-130.

The ALO coordinated with the AC-130 and night vision equipped F-18s for direct communication during a night mission. The concept of the operation required that the AC-130 be on station for one hour. The ALO, battalion commander, and S-2 positioned themselves at a central location. The AC-130 would fly over this location, and the ALO would mark the position with an infrared strobe to identify the start point (as the hub of a spoke system). From his position, the ALO gave the AC-130 a heading and distance to known unit checkpoint grids. Ground forces at these locations, which also had infrared strobes, were required to shut down their vehicles to prevent additional heat signatures. The AC-130 was directed to orbit the area to identify movement. The ground forces were prepared to react to sightings by way of communications through the battalion commander. F-18s would be used as an extra means of identification as well as a show of force, if necessary.

The ground forces did not have reflective tape, which would have made it easier to distinguish between friendly units and factions. Because of restrictions from the Combined Air Op-

erations Center, the AC-130 could not fly close enough to the Croatian border to observe two critical checkpoints. This coordination must take place well before the execution of a mission. The AC-130 is designed to observe pinpoint targets, and it takes up to 15 minutes to effectively establish its pattern, resulting in slow movement from point to point. This significantly reduces the amount of work that can be accomplished during one hour of station time. A unit should request three hours for time-on-target and should reduce the number of targets to ensure thorough reconnaissance of the AOR.

The Joint Surveillance Target Acquisition Radar System (JSTARS) was also used in the verification process. The brigade was supported by one ground station module (GSM), which received JSTARS information. Initially, the JSTARS monitored large sectors, making it difficult to analyze specific areas. As a result, the S-2 narrowed the focus of the JSTARS by orienting the system on NAIs for specified periods of time. He also gave the GSM operators (who performed limited analysis) priority intelligence requirements and likely patterns to look for and observe.

JSTARS had certain limitations (particularly in this environment) that precluded its employment as a stand-alone collection asset. Nevertheless, the brigade experienced several successes with the JSTARS:

- It identified large movements out of towns that were to be transferred between factions. After the S-2 was alerted to these movements, civilian and military operations personnel were sent to the location to determine the reasons for the movements.
- In addition, JSTARS confirmed a ferry site that was being used to move military equipment. The site was designated an NAI for a period of several days, and the moving target indicator detected the movement across the river.
- Two or three tanks were identified in an assembly area by a fixed target indicator and confirmed, to some degree, by a SAR photograph.
- A railhead where armored vehicles were being loaded was identified near a key town.
- The JSTARS database also confirmed the exact date movements began.

The ZOS had to be patrolled daily, and the units in sector had to verify that all the factions remained clear of their former positions, that the zone had no weapons, and that it allowed freedom of movement for civilian traffic.

This was a herculean effort, given the size of the sector and the number of other tasks associated with the mission. The numerous roads and trails and the vast distances were made worse by the poor conditions of the road network. The peace agreement also required TF Eagle to man certain fixed checkpoints, and in a JMC, the factions agreed upon joint patrols within the ZOS. The brigade identified the need to develop a standard border-surveillance plan with the intent of establishing a series of checkpoints along the ZOS. There was at least one base camp in each company sector of the ZOS. Each sector would have at least one permanent checkpoint along the primary roads, and more could be added if necessary.

The zone would be patrolled daily by the air assets. The air patrols would be conducted at least once during daylight hours and once after dark. They would patrol the entire trace of the ZOS unless a specific region required close scrutiny. Random ground patrols would go out daily, some mounted and some on foot. The plan required both day and night reconnaissance.

The mounted patrols were assigned a series of checkpoints; they approached each checkpoint carefully, stopped and dismounted, observed the region for any changes since the last patrol, reported any observations, then mounted and moved to the next checkpoint. The vehicles would have a specified time between checkpoints, and the base would monitor reporting to track progress and identify any possible problems in the zone. Ground patrols were conducted in much the same manner. (As of the time this article was written, the details for the joint reconnaissance with the factions had not yet been worked out.) The entire zone was covered by observation and patrol within a set time period, such as 48 to 72 hours.

TF Eagle units faced the problem of ensuring that the vacated positions within the ZOS were not reoccupied at night or during other periods of limited visibility. Dismounted patrols during the day walked through the trench lines and bunker positions with a guide from the factions. The intent was to show that the faction forces had evacuated the trench lines. There were reports, however, that some of the bunkers along the trench lines contained loaves of bread and had folded blankets on the wooden bunks; this resulted in the decision to develop a plan to verify that the bunkers were actually vacated during the night.

Although foot patrols through the trenches would be dangerous at night, there was the alternative of patrolling the routes with M-3 Bradleys and above the ZOS with scout weapons teams. Through the use of passive and thermal optics, the patrols could determine whether there were any unusual heat or light sources in the "vacated" regions. If personnel were identified, it would be necessary to confront the factions with the information and let them know their violations were being monitored.

The success of this ZOS operation can be attributed to many factors, including excellent pre-deployment training at the Combat Maneuver Training Center, soldiers and leaders who were mentally and physically prepared for the mission, and the willingness of the factions to comply with the peace agreement.

Most important, however, TF Eagle units executed the tasks in accordance with their training, adopted and refined TTPs when required, and maintained flexibility in both the planning and the execution of the mission.

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